

ST. PAUL CHAPTER INFORMATION

Chapter Coordinators/Steering Committee: Cathy Seehuetter, Jan Navarro, Debbie Halfen, Lyle Lindberg, Dave Esberg, Denise Bjerke, Cori Clagherty, Kim ZumMallen, Cliff & Sandy Romberg

Newsletter Editor: Cathy Seehuetter

Chapter Webmaster: Dave Esberg (tcfstpaul.org)

Treasurer: Lyle Lindberg

Librarian: Jan Navarro

Remembrance Cards: Kathy Lesnau

1st Contact: Linda Bergan

Outreach: Karen Gorz

Hospitality: Kim ZumMallen

Newsletter Mailing and Folding: Susan Rogge

Sibling Contact: Alyssa Frank

TELEPHONE FRIENDS: Please call the following phone friends if you need someone to talk with:

ACCIDENTAL/SUDDEN DEATH

Cathy.....651-459-9341

ILLNESS

Jeanne.....651-330-7613

SUICIDE

Dave (cell phone) 612-747-8225

ONLY CHILD

Kathy.....651-426-2446

INFANT LOSS

Lori.....952-229-4630

CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Lois.....651-777-2342

SIBLING LOSS:

Alyssa.....651-528-6073

OTHER TCF CHAPTERS

MINNEAPOLIS: Meets the 3rd Monday of every month at Calvary Lutheran Church, 7520 Golden Valley Road in Golden Valley. Contact Carol at 763-542-8528.

RICHFIELD: Meets the 2nd Monday of every month at Hope Presbyterian Church, 7132 Portland Ave. So. For directions or more information, call Chris or Bob at 612-825-6500.

ST. CROIX VALLEY: Meets the 1st Thursday of every month at United Methodist Church, 1401 Laurel Avenue, Hudson, WI. For more information, call Ron or Kathy at 651-439-3290.

APPLE VALLEY: For meeting times and location, please call Shirley at 952-432-5955

NEW SIBLING CONTACT PERSON!

Alyssa Frank, Jesse's sister, is our new sibling contact. She will take phone calls or e-mails from siblings who would like another sibling to talk to and share with. She is hoping to start a St. Paul Chapter sibling group in the future. Alyssa has participated in the sibling program at the past two TCF National Conferences, and is in contact with many siblings she met through the Oklahoma City and Nashville conferences. **Alyssa can be reached at:**

- Phone number: 651-528-6073

- E-mail address: jessesbabysis@aol.com

SUPPORT GROUPS AND NEWSLETTERS

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NATIONAL OFFICE

TCF.....toll free: 877-969-0010

E-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

National Website: www.compassionatefriends.org

SUICIDE

Survivors of Suicide612-922-5830

Suicide Awareness.....952-946-7998

or 1-800-511-SAVE

Crisis Hotline.....1-800-784-2433

PARENTS OF MURDERED CHILDREN

St. Paul Chapter.....651-484-0336

E-mail: pomcmn@isd.net

National number.....(toll free)(888) 818-POMC

OTHER NEWSLETTERS

Alive Alone: Loss of an only child. There may be a minimal charge.

Kay Bevington

11115 Dull Robinson Road

Van Wert, OH 45891

The Compassionate Friends, We Need Not Walk Alone, TCF's National newsletter is published four times per year. This publication is for siblings and grandparents also.

TCF

PO Box 3696

Oak Brook, IL 60522

Parents of Murdered Children. POMC helps survivors deal with their grief and the justice system. Write to:

Parents of Murdered Children

MN HOPE Chapter

PO Box 516

Circle Pines, MN 55014

Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education:

SA/VE

8120 Penn Ave. So.

Bloomington, MN 55431

888-511-SAVE

www.SAVE.org

THE UNITED WAY

To those who give to the United Way through their place of employment: You can designate that your United Way contribution go to the St. Paul Chapter of The Compassionate Friends. In order for our chapter to receive that donation, you must clearly state that it is to go to the "St. Paul, MN Chapter of The Compassionate Friends". Our chapter exists only through donations; therefore, we sincerely appreciate your support.

OUR CHILDREN REMEMBERED



In the days ahead, may we lovingly remember these children and their families...

LOVED...MISSED...REMEMBERED ON THEIR BIRTHDAYS AND ALWAYS

AUGUST

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8-03-86 Brett, son of Mark & Lonnie Bohnen | 8-16-76 Levi, son of Sue Ward |
| 8-03-87 Sam, son of Rick & Linda Peterson | 8-22-59 Michael, son of Doris Smith |
| 8-08-77 Steven, son of Kathy & Vince Schettner | 8-25-78 Nicole, daughter of Joe & Denise Kirby |
| 8-09-96 Carley Jean Bruening, daughter of Brenda Bauman | 8-27-07 Daphanie, granddaughter of Sam Zimmerli |
| 8-14-92 Amanda, daughter of Bill & Karen Berglund | |

SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|--|---|
| 9-04-63 Stephanie, daughter of Margie Baker | 9-24-79 Kristina (Nina) Westmoreland, daughter of Cathy & Greg Seehuetter, sister of Lisa, Amy & Dan, granddaughter of Harlan & Ellie Plumb |
| 9-04-74 Kellie Kaye, daughter of Joannie Kemling | |
| 9-11-77 Loren Tyner Lamb, son of Johanna Lester | 9-24-91 Jessica Swanson, granddaughter of Ruth Krause |
| 9-13-74 Bill Achterling, stepson of Steve Wertz | 9-24-83 Mike, son of Mary & Jack McGuire |
| 9-14-62 Jim, son of Pat Harp | 9-27-75 John, son of Joe & Marlene Keyser, brother of Maureen Johnson |
| 9-18-78 Karissa, daughter of Steve & Lou Neumann | 9-28-76 Timothy, son of Diane & Ken Olinger |
| 9-22-77 Heather, daughter of Kim & Linda Sanborn | |

OCTOBER

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10-02-69 Mitchell John, son of Joannie Kemling | 10-28-94 Michael, son of Merrilee Town |
| 10-04-86 Larry, son of Russ & Marsha Williams | 10-29-86 Kelly, daughter of Bob & Jeanne Walz, sister of Tina Thompson |
| 10-09-60 Cynthia, daughter of Lois & Warren Johnson | 10-30-67 Danette Payne, daughter of Diane Nelson |
| 10-13-81 Shauna Lee Chute, daughter of Brenda Skogman | 10-30-83 Briana, daughter of Keith Klindworth & Debbie Lawrence, granddaughter of Lois Klindworth |
| 10-14-85 Carlos Rivera, son of Jannette Cruz | 10-31-03 Jaden, son of Teresa & Jason Karsten |
| 10-14-76 Michael, son of Bonnie Boyum | 10-31-87 Cody, son of Don and Deb Nelson |
| 10-27-79 Erin, daughter of Colleen & David Hines | |

OUR BELOVED CHILDREN...IN OUR HEARTS ALWAYS... ON THEIR REMEMBRANCE DAY

AUGUST

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8-02-05 Stephen, son of Don & Nancy Selander | 8-23-04 Ryan, son of Cori Clagherty |
| 8-04-97 Adam, son of Mark & Linda Triplett, brother of Katrina | 8-24-00 Larry, son of Lois Nyman |
| 8-06-00 Cindy, daughter of Lois & Warren Johnson | 8-25-00 Karissa, daughter of Lou & Steve Neumann |
| 8-10-04 Danny, son of Mona Morrissey, brother of Rob | 8-28-95 Kaylen, daughter of Scott & Cheryl Baker |
| 8-12-99 Erin, daughter of Colleen Como | 8-29-93 Kerri Braun, daughter of Barb & Dave Deters |
| 8-17-04 Briana, daughter of Keith Klindworth & Debbie Lawrence, granddaughter of Lois Klindworth | |

SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|--|---|
| 9-03-01 Ian, son of Nancy and John Price | 9-16-98 Zachary Jon, son of Patty Gaffney |
| 9-03-05 Micah, son of Tommy & Michele Thompson | 9-21-91 Jason, son of Jim & Ann Reisdorf |
| 9-12-87 David, son of Bev & Jim Franzen | 9-20-07 Derek Beauclair, grandson of Ralph & Carol Bauman |
| 9-14-06 Robert, son of Janice & Mark Baird | 9-22-07 Michael, Jr., son of Mike & Carol Morgan |

OCTOBER

- | | |
|---|---|
| 10-03-03 Bobby, son of Donna & Greg Land | 10-15-04 Hannah, daughter of Kim & Carl ZumMallen, niece of Wileen Tibbetts |
| 10-06-94 Jody Rosenberg, son of Ruth Krause | 10-17-99 Michael, son of Bonnie Boyum |
| 10-09-07 Nicole, daughter of Denise & Joe Kirby | 10-23-03 Levi, son of Sue Ward |
| 10-12-93 Mitchell John, son of Joannie Kemling | 10-23-05 Tammy Marie Malcolm, daughter of Mary Lou O'Connor |
| 10-14-00 Tommy, son of Tom & Carol Nace | 10-25-94 Jim, son of Pat Harp |
| 10-15-89 Michael, son of David & Marcia Preller | 10-27-02 Jacob, son of Laura & David Tussey |

Sincere apologizes to the family of Erin Como, whose birth date was missing from the last newsletter: Date of birth 6-17-96

"**LOVE GIFTS**" are tax-deductible donations given in memory of our children or other loved ones by family, friends, or other caring people who wish to help with the work of the St. Paul Chapter. Our chapter is self-supporting and donations are our only means of existence. We gratefully accept these gifts with the knowledge that our children, siblings and grandchildren are warmly remembered. "**Love Gifts**" were given in loving memory of (by the following):

- Jami Agudelo, daughter of Pat Ossell
- Todd, son of Shirley & Don Terhell
- Anna Bakkestuan, from Shirley & Don Terhell
- Gary Oelkers, from Shirley & Don Terhell
- Derek Beauclair, grandson of Ralph & Carol Bauman, for his 14th birthday on July 24th.
- Nina Westmoreland, daughter of Cathy & Greg Seehuetter
- Charlie, son of Kathy & Al Lesnau
- Hannah, daughter of Kim ZumMallen

Richard Peterson, SAVE'S 2007 Volunteer of the Year

A member of our St. Paul Chapter family, Richard Peterson, Andy's dad, was selected as the SAVE 2007 Volunteer of the Year. SAVE is Suicide Awareness/Voices of Education. Their mission is to prevent suicide through public awareness and education, eliminate stigma, and serve as a resource for those touched by suicide. Below is an article written by Marit Brock, volunteer contributor, for the Voices of SAVE publication:

Each year SAVE recognizes a volunteer who has expanded the reach of our organization in a meaningful way. The competition is usually very strong because of the great dedication of members of the SAVE volunteer community. The 2007 Volunteer of the Year Award recipient is Richard Peterson for his work in expanding SAVE's message to the law enforcement community. When you first meet Richard Peterson, you would never guess that he has suffered greatly. That is part of what drives him to reach out to others. "You never know if the person sitting next to you is hurting, so you need to reach out and let them know you care," he says. "You just might save a life."

He didn't always feel that way. Following the death of his son, Andy, in February 2005, Richard was searching for hope. He wanted to remember his son's life and was drawn to the SAVE Named Memorial Fund. He says it helps to focus on the great person Andy was, rather than the circumstances of his death. He describes his son with glowing words. "He was handsome, loving and spiritual, but mental illness grabbed on to him," Richard says. Richard's family includes wife, Julie, son Lucas and daughter Hannah.

Richard joined a survivor support group and soon became a member of SAVE's Speaker's Bureau. After nearly 30 years in law enforcement, he knew he could make a difference by tailoring SAVE's message to a law enforcement perspective. "They listen to me because I am one of them," he notes. His no-nonsense approach has helped change some law enforcement policies about dealing with a suicide death. He and Dan Reidenberg, SAVE's

Executive Director, are developing a wallet card with tips to help police officers work with suicide survivors after a death. He recently expanded his message to the faith community and has helped a local church develop a support group for suicide survivors. That group already has a waiting list for new members, which supports his point that a lot of people are hurting, and even though it's tough to talk about suicide, it is important to start the discussion.

He describes speaking to groups about suicide as a journey of recovery that has helped him to heal. "In a way, SAVE saved me," he observes.

Richard now helps others find a glimmer of hope in the world of depression. "Andy would be proud of his dad!" he says with a big smile on his face.



BIRTHDAY TABLE

Every month at our meeting, we have a birthday table. In the month of your child, grandchild, or sibling's birthday, please bring pictures and small mementos of your child to place on the table. You may also bring their favorite cake, cookies or other snack for the table in memory of your child. We do this to celebrate our children's lives, and to share their birthday with others who understand our need to acknowledge this special day.

Nominations for 2009 Compassionate Employer Recognition (CER) are now being accepted

We in The Compassionate Friends have heard many stories from our members about how their grief was handled in the workplace. Some of these stories have been heartwarming and reassuring, depicting employers that provided a caring, understanding environment for employees grieving the death of a child, sibling or grandchild. Others, however, have reminded us that much progress remains to be made.

Through its Compassionate Employer Recognition Program, TCF seeks to recognize those caring companies and other organizations whose workplace policies and practices go above and beyond the norm in providing a caring workplace for employees who have suffered the death of a child, sibling or grandchild.

CER nominations are now being accepted, and will be accepted until midnight, November 8, 2008. CER recipients will be announced March 9, 2009.

Note from the Editor: *If you would like to nominate your employer (even if you do not work for them now, but did at the time of your child, sibling or grandchild's death), look for further information on the Home Page of the TCF National website (www.compassionatefriends.org) It not only gives an employer a much-deserved pat on the back as well as a plaque and acknowledgment in a national press release, but spreads the word in the community about TCF and our chapter. In 2008, Merrill Communications of St. Paul, MN, was nominated by one of our members, Mark Baird, Robert's dad, and was chosen as a recipient of a CER Award. I was given the opportunity to present the award to Merrill with a group of Mark's coworkers present.*



... Thoughts from the Editor...

SEPTEMBER MUSINGS...

Editor note: The following was one of the first things I wrote for "Thoughts from the Editor"; it was written 8 years ago, September 2000. One of the pluses of writing /journaling is that you will find that you have most definitely made progress as you journey through grief. I plan to write in a future newsletter about the value of writing and journaling.

You are going about your everyday tasks, thinking that just maybe this might turn out to be an "okay" day, one that you think you might actually get through. But then a certain song plays on the radio, or you see someone tilt his/her head and smile in that certain way your child did, or the smell of the air after a rainstorm brought you back to a poignant memory of your child. And without warning, you find yourself suddenly spiraling into despair, collapsing in a torrent of tears. Even something that may seem harmless can trigger a grief storm, sneaking up on you when you least expect it. I remember one of the parents in our group telling how the sight of a box of Kraft Macaroni & Cheese could make her leave her cart behind and flee the grocery store, because it was one of her son's favorites.

For example, the month of September may seem innocent enough. There aren't any major holidays like Christmas to deal with. But this is a month that isn't easy for me, and I am sure that many bereaved parents would agree. Starting the school year is a momentous occasion for many children. Those whose child that died wasn't old enough for school will never get to see the excitement on their child's face as they go off to their first day of school; their hopes and dreams for that child can only be imagined. Those whose school-aged child has died know the stab of pain in their hearts as they watch the other children hustle off to school with their new lunch boxes and backpacks, knowing that their child should be among them and is not.

Those whose children were older when they died have memories of the preparation of getting ready for the school year. For example, my daughter Nina LOVED shopping with me for school clothes. The first fall after she died I could barely endure walking into the department stores, seeing those mannequins dressed in all the latest back-to-school fashions. I could picture how she would scurry through the racks of clothing, picking out her favorites. She would run into the fitting rooms where she would poke her head out to ask me what I thought about her choices. Seeing the moms and daughters shopping together was agonizing. Listening to those mothers with irritated, hassled voices, chiding their children to "Hurry up, I don't have all day!" made my head swim. If they only knew that there could come a day when they would be sorry they did not savor the time spent doing those kinds of mother/child things...

The dilemma for me was that Nina would be of college age and, knowing her love of school, I am quite sure she would be headed off to college. She would have been so excited! The September after she would have graduated, a parent whose child had left for a college out West called me and said, "Now that Kim is at college, I know exactly how you feel about losing Nina." That was one of those moments that I was rendered speechless. I might now have the wherewithal to respond, but not at that particular juncture in my grief journey. I remember my mind racing and wanting to say, "You can hop on a plane whenever the urge strikes to see her is overpowering; you can pick up the phone and hear her voice 24-hours a day; she will be coming home over the holidays and summer vacation when the school year has ended. But my daughter will NEVER come home again! How can you compare the two???" I guess we can only forgive them for their lack of empathy and comprehension, and be glad for them that they don't really know how it feels.

We can't block out what is happening around us or change the sometimes inappropriate things that come out of people's mouths. But we can keep those close to us who understand—a spouse or significant other, our surviving children if there are any, close family and friends. And, of course, we know our Compassionate Friends will always be there: those TCF friends who appreciate the difficulty of the path we are walking; those who understand that we need others to be gentle with our fragile hearts, and accept that there are no timetables in grief and recognize our present frailties. Those same priceless fellow grievers who know the sun will shine again, but, for now, realize they may need to hold the umbrella for us for a while.

Bless all of you who have been there, and who continue to be there, for other bereaved parents, siblings, and grandparents in need of understanding. May all of us be that fortunate to have people like that in our currently shattered lives, so that someday, when the cloud has lifted, we can be that "Compassionate Friend" for someone else.

*With gentle thoughts,
Cathy Seehuetter, Nina's mom
TCF/St. Paul, MN. Chapter*

You Are Not Alone

We know the heartache that you bear,
we've felt the pain, because we've been there.

We share a bond of infinite sorrow,
a hope for peace, strength for tomorrow.

A time will come when you'll seek relief,
solace and comfort to ease your grief.

We welcome you—we will be there.

We understand; we've much to share.

- TCF/Scranton, PA

*(Editor's note: Please join us for our meetings on **the second Thursday of each month**. Though the first meeting can be difficult, you will find other parents who have the same feelings you are now experiencing, making your grief more bearable. Please join us; we want to help.)*

Living Life From the Graveyard

There's the joke about the cemetery. "How many dead people are in there?" The answer: "All of them." It brought a smile to my lips the first time a ten-year-old told me. But after my son died, I was wondering why there are so many jokes about death and being dead. "We joke about what we fear," Daniel's pediatric oncologist at UNC-Chapel Hill's Hospital told me.

Well, I don't fear the cemetery anymore. The movies and TV shows, especially around Halloween, like to depict the graveyard as a scary place with ghosts and goblins. For me, the graveyard is a place of peace. My children have named the one where four-year-old Daniel is buried Daniel's Place. On cool autumn mornings I like to take a steaming cup of coffee and blanket and visit Daniel's Place. Beside his marker I have created many poems about longing, laughter, memories, and hope. Beside his marker I have seen life through a misty, but realistic pair of eyes.

On his death date and birth date, we send up colorful helium balloons with attached messages. Often we add stickers of animated characters that he liked. We've eaten sweet slices of watermelon, spit the seeds as he used to, had picnics and played softball - all at the cemetery. For a few years after Daniel's death my husband would go to Daniel's Place every week to reflect while smoking a cigar. The cemetery is a part of our lives now. We've yet to see a goblin.

I travel to other places of rest. In New Bern, North Carolina, we took a trolley tour of the city and one of the stops was the cemetery. The stories of the Union and Confederate soldiers told by our guide were fascinating. But the words on the tombstones of children were what I remember the most. They used to write on the infant graves the exact age of the child who died - "Jeremy Hawthorne, infant son of Zachary and Millie Hawthorne, nine months, two weeks and three days old." In the nearby town of Hillsborough, my family and I took a walk through The Old Town Cemetery, by the Presbyterian Church. The city has deemed this place, constructed in 1757, a historical site. I'm sure one of the reasons is because fame has been buried here: the body of William Hooper, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

While that impresses me, I am more taken with the engraving on the creamy white tomb of a young woman. Someone chose to inscribe the following thoughtful words and within the whole cemetery there is no sentiment that compares:

Sacred to the memory of Mary Shaw

24 years

March 9, 1840

She needs no formal record of her virtues on this cold marble. They are deeply graven on the tablets of many warm and loving hearts, in which her memory is tenderly and sacredly cherished.

I wonder what kind of friend, parent or spouse this Mary was. Truly many must have loved her, been devoted to her, and agonized over her early death.

Beauty is written within the walls of cemeteries for beauty was lived on this earth. Graveyards are places of remembrances, love and warmth. Cemeteries are not scary...unless we fear what others will say about us and place on our stones when we are six feet under - perhaps there lies the anxiety. Will I be remembered lovingly? Will anyone miss me? Will friends and family sacredly cherish who I was to them? What legacy have I left behind?

While no one has been perfect and surely we leave behind those who may not have understood why we did the things we did like own a pit bull or hang our laundry out to dry at 2 a.m., hopefully we aren't so far despised that one would choose to have inscribed on our tomb the words on the grave of Gussie of Ocanto, Wisconsin: Here lies the body of a girl who died, Nobody mourned and nobody cried. How she lived and how she fared, Nobody knew and nobody cared.

We all get one chance here on this terrestrial ball. Cemeteries speak of that loudly, yet solemnly. Near Daniel's stone is one of an infant who died only days after he was born. What kind of life did he have? What kind of impact? His epitaph proclaims for all who learn from the words on tombs - in this generation and for those that follow - "We're so glad you came." I imagine his parents devastated over the brevity of their son's life and yet, at the same time, delighted to have known him.

I prefer to take my coffee to the cemeteries. I do learn from the dead. Gone are my days of being ruled by fear and trying to laugh the inevitable off. At the cemeteries I learn how I can best live with each day I am given. Now.

- *Alice Wisler, Daniel's mom, (reprinted from the Expanded Sky)*

"PROGRESS"

Recently, a friend and neighbor of mine experienced the death of a third child. Three of their children have died in less than three years! It was an unimaginable tragedy, and it made me reflect again on our society and its approach to grief. The only "good news" in this enormous tragedy is that it appears that we are showing evidence of a more tolerant and healthy approach to grieving. Of course, we still have a long way to go, but progress in our psychosocial attitudes during the last fifteen or twenty years is showing in our culture more and more.

For example, we are seeing a great deal more in the media about the reality of the grief experience. The 1940s movie depiction of sadness as a maudlin, solitary teardrop, followed by a grand sweep of the arm in false bravado, is now considered almost funny. Though today's movies and television still provide too much makeup and orchestral background, they tend to lean closer to the reality of the grief experience.

Even with improvement though, our modern society is still too reluctant to offer adequate grief support. There is still a wide canyon of ignorance and misinformation about what is appropriate to say or do. Organized grief support provides much-needed education in many forms. Support groups, hospices, grief-specialist counselors, funeral-home staffs, clergy and many schools and universities are all marching toward the shining new beacon of emotional enlightenment.

Even the stereotype of the staunch, stuffy and morose old "undertaker" has given way to the image of a sensitive, confident and trustworthy, caregiving funeral director with a good sense of humor and honest compassion. Today's funeral directors (no longer are they called undertakers) could easily pass for any ivy-league-graduate businessman. Modern society is definitely on the march, but it's still going to be a long walk!

I don't believe the average person who is standing on the sidelines of bereavement is uncaring or insensitive. Most of them are compassionate, but they need more education. They are so scared of saying or doing something that will make our pain worse, they often opt for the safer choice of saying or doing nothing at all—even changing the subject to "protect" the griever from memories. They have no notion that the grieving person interprets their avoidance as indifference!

It has not occurred to them that the griever cherishes memories and wants to share them. Typically, the mourning person seeks opportunities to talk about the loved one who died, loves to hear the name of the deceased mentioned and is delighted when friends share their recollections.

In the past, "traditional men" were assigned roles that required enormous emotional control. Until recently, only men went to war, only men engaged in rough or violent sports, only men were considered emotionally "tough" enough to handle corporate

America's business maneuvers. Many men were taught from childhood that expression of emotion is a feminine trait—to be avoided at all costs by "real men."

However, we are seeing a new turn on the merry-go-round of our society. Gradually, women have established themselves as equally capable in men's traditional roles. One of the results is that, now, both men and women are allowed to cry. In fact, on talk show after talk show, women will proclaim their ideal man as one who is "sensitive" and not afraid to show his feelings.

Actually, men have always had the same emotions as women, but it has only been recently that they have been encouraged to express their feelings openly. Some theorists have advanced the idea that men who were not allowed normal emotional expression found more violent ways to ventilate their feelings. Perhaps as we continue to learn, there will be fewer emotional volcanoes and more cleansing rain.

For perhaps the first time in the history of mankind, people all over the globe are examining and studying with new vigor emotional pain and its expression. There seems to be a worldwide interest in understanding responses to emotional pain and finding more effective ways to deal with it.

In my opinion, these discoveries have led us into the twenty-first century with better psychological health and, eventually, the understanding and healing of all kinds of emotional disorders.

By Andrea Gambill, Fishers, IN

Reprinted with permission from Grief Digest, Centering Corporation, Omaha, NE

402-553-1200

www.griefdigest.com

A Tribute to My Brother

I think of you in silence,
My feelings seldom show,
But how it hurts to lose you
No one will ever know.

I hope there is eternal life,
So we can meet again.
I not only lost my brother,
I lost my very best friend.

The reason you left so early
I'll never understand why.

I just wish I had known you were never coming back,
Because I would have said good-bye.

-Martha, TCF-Concord, NH



MOMENTS

Opening the closet looking for the vacuum
you glimpse a shirt hanging there.
Walking down the hall



you pass the closed door.
His cat jumps in your lap
and settles in finding a comfortable spot.
Shopping for groceries
you spy the Entenmann's doughnuts.
A car goes by that you recognize.
Was the front plate crooked?
Driving past the tree you look.
You always have to look.

A familiar song plays on the radio
Moments that poke their heads up day after day
trying to enter your mind and take over.
Moments taking your breath away.
Moments that make you think that it isn't true.
You push them back with all your energy.
Ignore them. Keep busy and they will go away.

But without warning
One little moment pokes up.
Just a fleeting moment
appearing out of nowhere.
You have no more strength.
It explodes in your mind
and takes over your body.
Crying. Screaming. Hitting. Slamming. Asking Why?
Tears. Nausea. Dizziness. Sweating.
Your body finally goes numb. All feeling is gone.
The burst is over.

You pickup the pieces and take one little step.
Then another. face another day.
You see a bird at the feeder.
A butterfly lands on the flower you planted.
The sun peeks from behind a cloud.
A friend calls.
You feel ready to go on.
A hint of a smile appears.
You are gathering your strength.
You feel stronger than ever....

Waiting for those moments to poke at you again.
- *Janice Mazza*

The Warmth of Autumn

How can August be here again?

The fifth August I've seen since then.
School Bells will be ringing soon.

Night sky revealing a large full moon.

Warm memories are bursting forth.

Anticipation of Autumn, well, of course

Chilliness of Autumn soon to be here.

Approaching more quickly every year.

Traditional Apple Orchard and,

a pumpkin patch adventure planned.

Trick or Treating, I still remember when.

My 2 young children hauled the candy in.

Cheerleaders, Band and Football Games,

the announcer reading off their names.

Wiener roasts with wood smoke in the air.

Hay rides going down the road, to where?

Fall "Bath and Body" Products at the Mall.

Our enjoyment of smelling them all.

The warmth of Autumn brings memories of you.

I face this fifth Autumn, somewhat, anew.

My plans made well in advance.

Guests invited and if by chance.

an annual Autumn Apple Fest to attend.

But, still, the fear of remembering when.

Your car loaded with pumpkins galore

and every color mum and then more.

The warmth of Autumn, the colorful leaves.

But I, Kanda's Mom, will forever grieve.

- *In Memory of My Daughter, My Best Friend*

My Angel, Kanda Michelle Jacobs,

5/24/73 - 4/13/04

Written by Mom, August



*...Since you went away, the days grow long
And soon I'll hear ol' winter's song.
But I miss you most of all, my darling,
When autumn leaves start to fall."
- Johnny Mercer, lyrics, Autumn Leaves*

Waiting for Answers

Years ago I left my first meeting of The Compassionate Friends and drove home in tears. My son, Max, had died a few short weeks before and I had been anxiously awaiting this evening. These people must have some answers, I thought. With paper and pen in purse, I was ready to take notes and do as they prescribed. I would do anything to ease the ache in my soul. But when I walked out into the spring air later that night, I felt betrayed. I hadn't heard any answers. Instead of learning how to leave my grief behind, it had been confirmed, made more real with expression. I knew I would miss Max forever. Now I wondered if I would grieve forever. Would it always be this way, a flash of pain aligned with every memory?

During the next months and years, I attended TCF meetings and conferences, read books, raged, kept busy, sometimes spent the day in bed. I wrote, cried and talked about Max. Slowly, I discovered the answers I had long feared *were* true: yes, I will grieve forever, and yes, my memories will often provoke tears. But something had changed. My grief was now more forgiving, my tears almost sweet with memory. Max's life took shape again as the anguish of his death began to recede. If I would always miss him, I would also always have him with me in so many ways. I wanted to carry his memory into the future: the joy, the lessons, and the inevitable pain. How could I do otherwise?

As I walked to my car after that first meeting, the TCF chapter leader caught up with me. "How can I stop this pain?" I asked. She put her arm on my shoulder. "Just do what feels right to you," she said. "Listen to your heart. And we'll be here to listen, too." Sometimes the best advice is none at all.

- Mary Clark, TCF Sugarland/ SW Houston Chapter, TX

Remembering Our Babies

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Remembrance Day

October 15th



Precious Angel

Precious angel sent to earth,
Did they tell you of your worth?
More than diamonds, rubies or gold,
Only you do I want to hold.
So perfect your beauty as I look into your eyes,
That gentle reflection of angels in the skies.
Each day you grew inside me, so big and so strong,
But your time here with me was not to be long.
Oh how my heart aches as I have to say good-bye,
As I let you go back to play in the sky.

(Author Unknown)

Death from a Grandparent's Point of View (Remembering Our Bereaved Grandparents on Grandparents' Day, September 7, 2008)

The death of a child is the most tragic thing that can happen to anyone. It affects so many lives; family and friends; and even strangers. I lost my grandchild through death, and only a grandparent can understand the love a grandparent has for a grandchild and the loss that is felt when the child dies. For a grandparent, it is a double loss. Not only is your grandchild gone, but you also watch your child die each day. The smile that was always on her face is no longer there. The hurt is so deep and the questions so many. You feel helpless as a parent. You can't kiss away the hurt as you did when he was a child for you don't understand the many feelings you are experiencing yourself. Each day you hope and pray for a little something to say or do that will be of comfort to them. It seems that there is no end to the suffering. As times goes slowly by, the healing process begins. In time, a ray of hope will show on her face and a smile will make his eyes light up again. Your child will turn to you for what comfort that you can give. There will always be a part of you that is gone, but in time you can learn to live with the part that is still there.

-Ruth Eaton, TCF, Savannah GA

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS FOR SIBLINGS:

Mary A. Paulson, PhD, is a bereaved sibling as well as a child and adolescent psychologist at Harding Hospital in Worthington, Ohio. Her question and answer column, aimed at bereaved siblings and the family that loves them, appears in the quarterly TCF national magazine, We Need Not Walk Alone.

Q: My 8 year-old sister died almost 8 years ago. I think that I have worked through my grief quite well, but I still can't stop thinking about her. Her birthday is coming up shortly and I feel the need to celebrate it just as if she were with us. I'd like to have a party, cake and candles. My parents have never suggested anything like this before, so I don't know what their feelings would be. It's just that I want to do something to show that she has not been forgotten. Should I suggest this to my parents or forget the whole thing?

A: Celebrating your sister—her life, your relationship, the terrific person she was—sounds like a great idea. It's difficult to let her birthday go unnoticed. It might be a good idea to talk to the rest of your family and ask them how (and when) they might want to celebrate. We celebrate my brother's birthday every year by having RTTFG Day on that day--Refuse to Take For Granted Day. This is a day we not only celebrate him, but also each other. We take this day to remind each other how special we think they are and how much we love each other. We give each other gifts that are especially meaningful - favorite books, favorite activities, wishes, etc. I wholeheartedly recommend choosing a special day to remember her and celebrate her!

Wearing a Mask

Halloween is a great time to pretend to be someone else. You can be mean and nasty even though you're usually a pretty nice person, or you can be scary when you usually are the one that gets scared. You can pretend to be strong and powerful or beautiful or mysterious or famous. You can pretend to be anything on Halloween.

It isn't fun, though, to try to always wear a mask. Sometimes for a person who is grieving, it seems like you need to always pretend to be your old happy self. Your friends and others may want you to forget about your loss and go on as if nothing much has changed. But it is really hard to mask your true feelings all the time. It is much better for you if you can "take off your mask" and just be yourself sometimes. If you let your feelings out, then you are being honest with yourself and others. By taking off your mask and revealing your true self, you will be a much more REAL person. It's better to save masks for Halloween.

-From the *Inside Fernside* newsletter



Grief Fatigue

Do you ever feel like me? Right now, I am utterly tired of grief. I don't want to hurt, cry or feel empty. I want to scream. I am sick of it. I can't get away from the always-aching pit in my heart and soul. I search for understanding. I do all I can in the memory of my child who is gone and the others like her. I try to move into life again. I smile, I laugh, but inside I ache, my soul literally burns inside my body. This ache in my heart grows worse and harsher each day. Some say it gets better - WHEN??? That is what I want to know. When in this life am I going to feel better? I learn to live like this. It has not eased or vanished...I just cope better. Inside me I desire my child, outside I act fine and dandy! I want to feel whole, confident, full, happy, all the things that are so long gone I can't remember them. Oh, what I wouldn't give for the bliss of ignorance once more.—*A Bereaved Mom*

Halloween Magic

Halloween has always been a special time. I regret that our son only had a one-time experience at this magical time of year. I remember—as though it were yesterday—the wonder in his face, how he tried to eat the candy through his mask, how he said *thank you* without coaxing. Then I think of all the parents whose child never had the opportunity and I am grateful for that one time. It's hard watching all the children trick-or-treating, and yet there is something special about this season that comforts me,

As I watch the trees around me, I am reminded that there is a beauty even in their dying leaves. There's a special aroma, a breathtaking color scheme, and if you listen, a rustling in the air. I believe there is a message in fall. I believe God wants us to know that death is like a change of seasons, that our child now knows far more beauty than we can ever imagine, like the tree that lives on through the barren winter and comes alive again in spring, our children are not gone. They live!

- *Nancy Cassell*
TCF, Monmouth Co, NJ

On Seeing Many Orange-Colored Butterflies in September

Time between summer and winter,
Time under changing skies -
muted and heavy with foresight,
or endless blue, smiling at butterflies.

Time between summer and winter,
Time between laughter and tear -
harvest of beauty remembered
and voices (where are you?) to hear.

Time between summer and winter,
Thoughtful and painful and wise -
muted and heavy with losing,
but also - smiling at butterflies.

- *Sascha Wagner*



September Song

The school bells ring, young voices sing
And small ones shout with glee.
The autumn air beckons school to start
and left alone is me.

What makes me feel so down and blue
and boggled down with thoughts of you?

I see the school bus passing by
and find myself with a tear in my eye.

Is it the clothes we can't buy,
while others grab the jeans to try?

Or is it autumn in the air
that pulls at heartstrings—already bare?

Maybe it's the falling leaves
and dying grass,
bringing reflections like a looking glass?
Whatever the reason that stirs my heart,
every year when school must start,
reminds me how much I miss you.
Forever loved - forever missed.

- *A Mom, from TCF/Fort Worth, TX*



Fall

Fall is a season of many feelings.

Autumn is here once again,
As it comes every year.

And with the leaves
My falling tears. This time of years is the
hardest of all.

My heart is still breaking.
Once again it is fall.

Memories once so vivid
Are seeming to fade.
My time spent with you
Seems some other age.

This season reminds me
Of grief and of pain
But yet teaches hope
And joy once again.

For the trees are still living
Beneath their grey bark,
And you, my sweet child,
Are alive in my heart!

- *Cinda Schake, TCF/Butler, PA*

SAY OLIN

The time of concern is over.

No longer am I asked how my wife is doing. Never is the name of our son mentioned to me. A curtain descends. The moment has passed. A life slips from frequent recall.

There are exceptions: close and compassionate friends, sensitive and loving family. For most, the drama is over. The spotlight is off. Applause is silent. But for me, the play will never end. The effects are timeless.

Say Olin to me.

On the stage of my life, he has been both lead and supporting actor. Do not tiptoe around the greatest event in my life. Love does not die. His name is written on my life. The sound of his voice replays within my mind. You feel he is dead. I feel he is of the dead and still he lives. He ghost-walks my soul, beckoning in future welcome. You say he was my son. I say he is.

Say Olin to me, and say Olin again.

It hurts to bury his memory in silence. What he was in flesh lies buried miles away. What he is in spirit stirs within me always. He is of my past but he is part of my now. He is my hope for the future.

You say not to remind me.

How little you understand I cannot forget. I would not if I could. I understand you, but feel pain in being forced to do so. I forgive you, because you cannot know.

And I would forgive you anyway.

I accept how you see me, but understand that you see me not at all. I strive not to judge you, for yesterday I was like you. I love you, will make no expectations towards you. But I wish you could understand that I dwell both in flesh and spirit.

The mystery is that you do too, but know it not. I do not ask that you walk this road. The ascent is steep and the burden heavy. I walk it not by choice. I would rather walk with him in flesh, looking not to spirit roads beyond. I am what I have to be. What I have lost you cannot feel. What I have gained you cannot see. And I would not have you.

Say Olin, for he is alive in me.

He and I will meet again, though in many ways we have never parted. He and his life play light songs on my mind. He is real and shadow...was and is.

Say Olin to me and say Olin again.

He is my son, and I love him as I always did.

Say Olin.

*-Don Hackett, written in memory of his son, Olin
(Submitted by Teresa Quinn, Brandon's mommy)*



Summer's End

Always at summer's end,
there comes that moment when
memory brings to me
gifts from the past.

I see your faces then,
glistening in the sun.
I hear your laughter then,
shared by the wind.

And in that glint of time
I feel you near again,
as you were, long ago,
at summer's end.

Once

Once, when you left us
in the gold of autumn,
we thought that you
were gone from us forever,
that you were lost to us

Yet, we are close today,
more than we were before,
and now, because of you,
we see to other worlds.
we live in deeper regions.

You have become the bridge
from our commonplace
to great horizons,
the bridge from us
and our earthly time
to the abundance
of infinities.

August

The summer runs to harvest - do you
ask how could a harvest be without my
child? Friend, some day soon the
harvest in your life will bring you hope
and wealth from love remembered.

*(The above poems were written by
Sascha Wagner, Eve and Nino's mom)*

THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS/ST PAUL CHAPTER
C/O CATHY SEEHUETTER
7884 IRISH AVENUE SOUTH
COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016-2072

PLEASE FORWARD



Please circle the appropriate relationship:

Parent

Sibling

Grandparent

Relative

Friend

Professional

Parent (s) name: _____

Child/Children's Name(s) _____

Address: _____

Birth Date(s) _____

City: _____

Death Date(s): _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____

E-mail address: _____

() Permission is given to include my child(ren), sibling or grandchild on the Remembrance page in the St. Paul Chapter newsletter and Chapter Website.

() I wish to enclose a donation to the St. Paul Chapter of The Compassionate Friends in memory of _____

Please fill out the form above if you need to update information or to renew your newsletter subscription. The expiration date of the newsletter can be found on the mailing label..

THANK YOU TO MINUTEMAN PRESS FOR DONATING IN PART THE PRINTING OF THIS NEWSLETTER